

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH PRIORITY

SECSTATE WASHDC 2577

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MOPS, CB

SUBJECT: EXPELLED JOURNALIST CLAIMS EMBASSY INTERFERENCE

1. ARTICLE IN APRIL 22 NATION QUOTES UPI REPORTER AS SAYING U. S. EMBASSY PHNOM PENH IS EXECISING INFLUENCE ON CKR TO EXPEL FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS. FULL TEXT FOLLOWS.

2. BEGIN TEXT:

THE US EMBASSY IN PHNOM PENH HAS INTERFERED WITH THE FOREIGN PRESS AND IS EXCERCISING INFLUENCE ON THE CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT TO EXPEL FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS, A UPI REPORTER WHO WAS ORDERED TO LEAVE CAMBODIA ACCUSED YESTERDAY.

MISS SYLVANA FOA SAID THE EXPULSION ORDER ACTUALLY HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT BUT WAS APPARENTLY ENGINEERED BY THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN PHNOM PENH THAT WAS DISPLEASED WITH HER REPORTS OF CARELESS AMERICAN BOMBINGS.

" THE CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT HAD NO OBJECTIONS TO MY REPORTS ABOUT AMERICAN HEAVY BOMBINGS THAT CAUGHT A LOT OF REFUGEES FOR THEY WERE ACTUAL HAPPENINGS, SAID MISS FOA.

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SHE ADDED THAT THE AMERICAN EMBASSY WAS AFRAID SUCH REPORTS WOULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE PRESTIGE OF THE US GOVERNMENT.

THERE IS MOUNTING PRESSURE IN THE US CONGRESS CALLING FOR A TERMINATION OF AMERICAN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN THE CAMBODIAN WAR AND SO THE AMERICAN EMBASSY TRIES TO BLACK OUT NEWS OF THE AMERICAN BOMBINGS, SHE SAID.

THE AMERICAN EMBASSY HAS URGED THE CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT TO APPLY PRESSURE ON FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS DESPITE STRICT CENSORSHIP IMPOSED ON THEIR REPORTS AND ULTIMATELY THE EMBASSY WANTS ALL FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS TO BE EXPELLED, MISS FOA CHARGES.

MISS FOA SAID UPI HEADQUARTERS IN WASHINGTON WOULD LODGE A COMPLAINT WITH THE US STATE DEPARTMENT TO INSTRUCT THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN PHNOM PENH TO STOP INTERFERING WITH THE FOREIGN PRESS.

MISS FOA ALSO EXPLAINED THAT HER CASE WAS NOT AN EXPULSION. FOR SHE COULD RETURN TO CAMBODIA ANY TIME SHE WANTED. "I WAS JUST TOLD BY THE CAMBODIAN INFORMATION MINISTER TO LEAVE FOR A FEW WEEKS AND THEN COME BACK AFTER PEOPLE (MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN PHNOM PENH) FORGET THE DIFFICULTIES THEY HAD WITH ME." SHE SAID.

"REPORTERS ATTACHED TO OTHER NEWS AGENCIES ALSO HAVE SIMILAR DIFFICULTIES WITH THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN PHNOM PENH", SHE ADDED.

THERE ARE ABOUT 30 FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS IN CAMBODIA. THE UPI AGENCY HAS ONLY ONE REPORTER IN THAT COUNTRY AFTER THE EXPULSION OF MISS FOA.

MISS FOA ARRIVED IN BANGKOK ON FRIDAY-- TWO DAYS AFTER SHE WAS TOLD TO LEAVE. SHE HAD BEEN COVERING NEWS IN VARIOUS BATTLE FRONTS THROUGHOUT CAMBODIA FOR ONE AND A HALF YEARS BEFORE HER REPORTS TROUBLED THE AMERICAN EMBASSY THERE.

FROM BANGKOK SHE PLANS TO GO TO HONG KONG AND THEN UNCLASSIFIED

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RETURN TO PHNOM PENH IN THREE WEEKS. END TEXT.

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